

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /031 W

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8517

SECRET NEW DELHI 14766

EXDIS

FOR THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN, US

SUBJ: MEETING WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER

SUMMARY: SWARAN SINGH WANTS THE SECRETARY TO COME TO INDIA IN MARCH, TO BE AN INTERMEDIARY SORT OF WITH THE CHINESE, AND TO FIND OIL OFF BOMBAY. END SUMMARY.

1) ON DECEMBER ONE, JUST PRIOR TO LEAVING FOR HOME, I CALLED ON MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS SWARAN SINGH WHO ASKED IF I WOULD CONVEY A SERIES OF COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS TO THE SECRETARY, WHICH I DID. I MET WITH THE MINISTER AN HOUR TODAY TO RELAY THE SECRETARY'S RESPONSES AND RECEIVED YET ANOTHER SET OF COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS IN RETURN, ALL VERY UPBEAT.

2) WITH RESPECT TO THE PL-480 SETTLEMENT INITIALED YESTERDAY, THE MINISTER WAS HIGHLY APPRECIATIVE THAT SUCH COMPLEX NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD HAVE BEEN COMPLETED IN SUCH A SHORT TIME AND WISHED TO ADD THAT ON THE U.S. SIDE A GESTURE OF GENEROSITY AND MAGNANIMITY HAD BEEN SHOWN.

3) THE MINISTER IS DELIGHTED THAT THE SECRETARY WILL BE COMING TO INDIA. THE SECRETARY WOULD BE MOST WELCOME AT ANY TIME CONVENIENT TO HIM. HE KNOW OF THE SECRETARY'S SECRET

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IMPERVIOUSNESS TO PHYSICAL DISCOMFORT AND YET WONDERED IF MARCH WOULD NOT BE A CONVENIENT DATE AS THE WEATHER WOULD STILL BE GOOD. (I VOLUNTEERED THAT I THOUGHT MARCH WOULD BE A GOOD DATE, ALWAYS ALLOWING FOR INTERVENING

EVENTS).

4) ON THE MATTER OF U.S. SHIPS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, HE APPRECIATED THE FRANKNESS OF DR. KISSINGER'S EXPOSITION OF AMERICAN POLICY. HE DID NOT DISAGREE WITH MY COMMENTS AT THE DELHI PRESS CLUB YESTERDAY. (I SAID WE WOULD FROM TIME TO TIME EXERCISE OUR PERFECT AND UNIMPAIRED RIGHT TO SAIL THE HIGH SEAS, AND ON OCCASION TO CALL AT THE PORTS OF FRIENDLY AND ALLIED POWERS IN THIS AREA, WHILST OBSERVING THE DESIRE OF OTHER FRIENDLY POWERS SUCH AS INDIA THAT WE NOT IN CIRCUMSTANCES NORMAL TO US CALL AT INDIAN PORTS. SOMEONE PLEASE NOTE FOR THE SECRETARY THAT THIS WAS MY FIRST PRESS CONFERENCE SINCE COMING TO INDIA TEN MONTHS AGO.) THE MINISTER NOTED HOWEVER, THAT U.S. PRESENCE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN IS ALSO VERY STRONG, AND WOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE THE PASSAGE THROUGH THE CANAL AS FAST AS ANY OTHER SHIPS. THIS KIND OF TALK HAS BEEN IN THE AIR FOR A LONG TIME NOW, E.G., THE RUSSIAN DESIRE FOR A WARM WATER PORT IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AND WHAT OTHER POWERS MIGHT DO IN REACTION TO THIS. INDIA DID NOT FIND THIS VERY HELPFUL. GIVEN THE GENERAL DETENTE THAT HAPPILY DOES EXIST BETWEEN THE US AND THE USSR HE WONDERS WHETHER THE TWO WOULD WANT TO HAVE A COMPETITIVE APPROACH IN SUCH A MATTER WHICH MAY BECOME A SOURCE OF TENSION. HE IS NOT UNMINDFUL OF THE CONCERNS OF EITHER POWER THEN VITAL INTERESTS ARE INVOLVED, WHEN IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO TAKE CORRECTIVE STEPS. BUT GIVEN THE MOBILITY OF ARMED FORCES IT IS SURELY THE CASE THAT THE UNITED STATES COULD BRING FORCES TO THE AREA QUICKLY. EVEN THE USSR CAN DO SO. THESE ARE INDIA'S CONCERNS. INDIA WILL HAVE NO HESITATION IN SAYING AS MUCH TO THE USSR. MRS. BANDARANAIKE WILL BE VISITING DELHI IN JANUARY, AND SHE IS BOUND TO RAISE ONCE AGAIN THE MATTER OF AN INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF PEACE WITH INDIA. IRAN, ALSO, IN THE TALKS THIS WEEK IN DELHI (FOREIGN MINISTER KHALATBARY RETURNING SWARANS SINGH'S EARLIER VISIT) SUPPORTED THE IDEA OF AN INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF PEACE, FREE ODVBIG POWER

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PRESENCE, THIS ZONE TO INCLUDE THE GULF AS WELL. HE COULD NOT FEEL THAT EITHER A U.S. OR USSR PRESENCE ON A SUSTAINED BASIS, AS AGAINST, I TOOK HIM TO SAY, A SHOW OF FORCE FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES, IS LIKELY TO BE RELISHED BY THE SMALL STATES BORDERING THE INDIAN OCEAN.

5) I RAISED THE PROPOSAL WHICH I HAD PRESENTED TO THE PRIME MINISTER LAST JUNE, AND WHICH THE SECRETARY MENTIONED TO AMBASSADOR KAUL LAST WEEK, THAT HE WAS PREPARED TO EXCHANGE VIEWS WITH AN INDIAN REPRESENTATIVE IN WASHINGTON IF THE PM WISHED TO SEND SOMEONE. I EXPLAINED THAT THESE EXCHANGES WITH THE BRITISH AND THE SOVIETS, FOR EXAMPLE, WERE NOT CONFINED TO ESTABLISHED

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AGENDA, NOTING THAT I HAD SUGGEST

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z
Capture Date: 10 MAY 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PL 480, SHIPS, INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF PEACE, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, MEETINGS, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE, NEGOTIATIONS, VISITS, PORT CALLS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 DEC 1973
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973NEWDE14766
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: P750033-1785
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731256/abqcegep.tel
Line Count: 109
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags: ANOMALY
Review Date: 20 DEC 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20-Dec-2001 by shawdg>; APPROVED <11-Jan-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEETING WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER
TAGS: PFOR, EWWT, EAID, ENRG, US, UR, IN, (SINGH, SWARAN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005